



Area State Parks— December 2015 Adventures, Events & Activities

From sites rich in cultural history to the scenic beaches of the north coast, parks in the Santa Cruz District invite the visitor to explore and enjoy. The district stretches from the sand dunes of Sunset State Beach near Watsonville up the coast to Montara State Beach north of Half Moon Bay and inland to Castle Rock State Park near the town of Saratoga.

Año Nuevo State Park

1 New Year's Creek Road, Pescadero, CA 94060

Seal Adventure Weekend

Saturday and Sunday, January 30 and 31, 2016

Tickets on sale now for fundraiser for educational programs!

The nonprofit Coastside State Parks Association (CSPA) and California State Parks will host Seal Adventure Weekend, a special fundraising event to support educational and interpretive programs at Año Nuevo State Park and other California State Parks along the San Mateo coast.

For one weekend only, visitors will have extraordinary access to linger for an entire morning (8:30 am to Noon) or afternoon (1:30 pm to 5 pm) to view the elephant seals at the peak of the breeding season. This is a rare opportunity, one that can be enjoyed by everyone, from families to avid wildlife photographers.

Seal Adventure Weekend tickets will be available for sale online (www.CoastsideStateParks.org), starting in November. Tickets are \$60 per person. The number of tickets is limited to avoid over-crowding and to enhance the experiences of visitors. Only 100 visitors will be allowed to register for each half-day session.

CSPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and the official cooperating association for California State Parks on the coast of San Mateo County. All money from ticket sales will be used to support programs and projects at Año Nuevo and other local state parks. Half the cost of the tickets is a donation to CSPA and is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Guided Seal Walks

Available daily from December 15 to March 31, between 8:45 am and 2:45 pm

Stroll over sand dunes guided by a docent naturalist to visit a large colony of Northern elephant seals. In the month of December, elephant seal bulls arrive and establish hierarchy, while pregnant females come ashore a place themselves close to a high ranking bull to give birth to their pups. These very popular guided walks are 3 miles round trip and last 2.5 hours. They take place rain or shine, so be prepared for windy, rainy conditions as well as muddy trails. Layered clothing, sturdy shoes, and rain gear are strongly advised. Umbrellas and strollers are not permitted. Pets are not allowed in the park.

For energy efficient recreation –
California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>



Advance reservations are strongly recommended. Cost is \$7 per person. Please contact Reserve America at 1-800-444-4445 or make your reservation online: anonuevo.reserveamerica.com

Equal Access Seal Tours

**Available Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from
December 18 to March 20, at 10 am and 1 pm**

If you need mobility assistance, you can sign up for our docent led equal access tours. You will board our accessible van and get a ride to our wheelchair-accessible boardwalk. The docents will accompany you to the two seal viewing decks, explain in details the Northern elephant seals' natural history, and answer all your questions. Reservations are required. Cost is \$7 per person. Due to limited space, each person with mobility needs can bring up to two guests/assistants. Please contact the park at 650-879-2033 or email Ano.EqualAccess@parks.ca.gov to make your reservations.

Events made possible by California State Parks and California State Parks Docents

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Castro Adobe State Historic Park

184 Old Adobe Road off of Larkin Valley Road in Watsonville
(831) 515-2802 or (831) 226-9669

A Unique Opportunity!

Open House for the Castro Adobe State Historic Park Saturday, December 5 from 11 am to 3 pm

You are invited to a "sneak peek" into our new state historic park. Open house visitors will be able to tour the property including the recently restored cocina (kitchen) and the Potter-Church Garden. State park staff and Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks volunteers will be on hand to offer information into the restoration process. Handmade tortillas and hot chocolate cooked on the recently reconstructed brasero (stove) will be provided. Admission is free, donations gratefully accepted. Parking is extremely limited, so carpooling is encouraged. The two-story Castro Adobe in Watsonville is currently undergoing a multi-year restoration process lead by Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, a local non-profit, and partnering with California State Parks. Built from 1848 to 1849, this is one of the finest examples of a rancho hacienda in the Monterey Bay area. The Castro Adobe State Historic Park is located at 184 Old Adobe Road, off of Larkin Valley Road, in northern Watsonville. The Castro Adobe is an active construction site and is accessible currently by appointment only except during the Open House Days. To follow progress on the restoration effort, visit www.ThatsMyPark.org/projects/castro-adobe. For more information contact Jennifer Squires (831) 515-2802 or Joseph Carr Ritchie (831) 226-9669.

Events made possible by Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks and California State Parks

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Wilder Ranch State Park

Located two miles north of Santa Cruz, on Highway 1

Park Hours: 8 am to Sunset; Interpretive Center: 10 am to 4 pm Thursday through Sunday

Press contact: Libbie Hodas (831) 426-0505; Libbie.Hodas@parks.ca.gov

A Special Annual Event!

Holidays on the Ranch

Saturday, December 12 from 11 am to 3 pm

Wilder Ranch State Park announces its annual family-friendly festival, Holidays on the Ranch. Step back in time for an old-fashioned holiday celebration with crafts, demonstrations, and tours. Join costumed living history interpreters as they turn back the clock to over 100 years ago in California. Hands-on activities and presentations will include candle and wreath making, cookie decorating, machine shop and blacksmith demonstrations, tours of the 1859 Gothic Revival farmhouse and 1897 Victorian home, and strolling Victorian carolers. Hot spiced cider and Mexican hot chocolate, as well as baked goods will be available for purchase. Visitors are encouraged to dress in turn of the century costumes.

This event is held on the grounds of the Wilder Ranch Cultural Preserve. The Park is located 2 miles north of Santa Cruz on the coast side of Highway 1 at 1401 Coast Road, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Day-use parking fee is \$10. For more information, please call (831) 426-0505.

Wilder Ranch State Park Living History Demonstrations and Ranch Tours

Weekends from 11 am to 3 pm

Tours of the Ranch at 1 pm

Explore California history at Wilder Ranch State Park. Step back in time over 100 years ago and visit this early coastal dairy ranch. Join a living history interpreter for a 1 hour weekend tour at 1 pm. Tour stops include an adobe brick structure dating back to the Spanish Colonial Era, a Gothic Revival farmhouse dating back to the 1850s; and from the 1890s, a Victorian home, horse barn, and blacksmith and machine shop housing the Pelton Water Wheel. Visitors can also play Victorian games or bring a picnic to enjoy the on the front lawn. Meet farm animals and see what activities are taking place on the ranch this weekend. Living history demonstrations vary per day. Call (831) 426-0505 for more details.

Wilder Ranch State Park Coastal Hikes

Saturday, December 5 at 11 am

Saturday, December 19 at 11 am

Saturday, December 26 at 11 am

Explore the ancient sea cliffs at Wilder Ranch State Park with a docent-led hike along the Old Cove Landing Trail. On these 2.5 mile, 2 hour natural history excursions you will discover the plants, animals, and geology of the spectacular coastal bluffs. Learn more about the Wilder Beach Natural Preserve and see where this watershed joins the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. Meet at the Wilder Ranch Interpretive Center. Bring a snack, water, and binoculars. Wear layers and good hiking shoes. Binoculars available to borrow.

Back Country Hike at Wilder Ranch State Park

Saturday, December 12 at 9 am

For energy efficient recreation –
California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>



Ever wondered how far back the trails go at Wilder Ranch State Park? Join long time naturalist docent Bill Perry as he guides this challenging 6 mile, 3 hour hike to explore the natural and cultural history of the upper hills of Wilder Ranch State Park. Meet at the Wilder Ranch parking lot. Wear layers and good hiking shoes. Bring lunch, snacks, and water. Binoculars encouraged. Rain cancels.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

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Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center

Located 17 miles north of Santa Cruz, at 3600 Highway One, Davenport, CA 95017
Open Weekends Noon to 4 pm. Call (831)427-2288.

Wildflower and Nature Hike of Waddell Valley

Saturday, December 12 at 10 am

Join docent Scott Peden and learn to identify many of Waddell Valley's plants within Rancho del Oso's seven diverse habitats. Observe the monthly change of the ecosystems. Each walk is unique as blooming flowers and pollinators are constantly in flux! This walk is a leisurely 4 hour amble that is great for learning the native habitat we are experiencing. Bring lunch, questions and spirited fervor! Meet the yellow gate across from the Waddell Beach parking lot.

Snake Park Saturday

Saturday, December 12 at 2 pm

Why are snakes important to us? How do they see, smell, taste, hear? What and how do they eat? What does a snake feel like? Come to the Rancho del Oso Ranger Station to meet Docent Diane Shaw and learn about the fascinating world of snakes. Several snakes will be on display and native reptile adaptations will be discussed in the beautiful backdrop of Waddell Valley! Ranger Station is located 0.25 mile inland from the yellow gate across from Waddell Beach parking lot.

Nature Wander

Sunday, December 13 at 1 pm

Find out what's growing and blooming right now in the Waddell Valley on this approximately 1 mile, 1.5 hour guided walk with docent naturalist Ann Garside. She will share information about the plants of Rancho del Oso as the group walks from coastal scrub through one of the last native stands of Monterey Pine left in the world. Hike starts at the Rancho del Oso Nature and History Center.

Birding in Waddell Valley

Saturday, December 12 at 8 am

Birding for all skill levels. Join us for an approximate two mile hike to observe and enjoy morning wildlife in Waddell Valley. We will take our time and move slowly. Bring binoculars, bird guides and readiness for silent observation as we witness wildlife awakening on a crisp autumn day. We will meet at the deck in front of the Nature Center.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Coastside State Parks Foundation. Visit us on the web at www.CoastsideStateParks.org and [Facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks](https://www.facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks) or www.parks.ca.gov

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Half Moon Bay State Beach

95 Kelly Avenue, Half Moon Bay, CA (650) 726-8804

Gray Whale Cove Trail Guided Walk

Saturday, December 12 at 10 am

Join Montara Docents for a 1.5 hour, 2 mile hike along the scenic Gray Whale Cove Trail along the edge of the California coast. View how the Ocean Shore Railroad has etched into the landscape and the remnant bunkers left over from the World War II era. The Gray Whale cove Trail is located at McNee Ranch which is part of Montara State Beach. Meet at the Gray Whale Cove State Beach parking lot on Highway 1 just south of Devil's Slide. For more information, please call (650) 726-8819.

Pescadero Marsh Preserve Guided Walk

Sunday, December 6 at 10 am

Sunday, December 20 at 1 pm

Join State Parks Docents for a 1 mile, 2 hour guided walk along the Sequoia Audubon Trail through this important stop along the Pacific Flyway. Explore the remnant levees from past farming and discover the byways of the Pescadero and Butano creeks in this restored marsh. Dress in layers, wear wading shoes, and bring binoculars and water. Rain cancels. Meet at the Central Pescadero State Beach parking lot, approximately 0.25 miles north of the junction with Pescadero Road. For more information, please call (650) 726-8819.

Burleigh H. Murray Ranch Guided Walk

Sunday, December 27 at 1 pm

Take a journey back in time to experience how early pioneers and farming families survived here in the 19th Century. This stroll travels along the Mills Creek for a 2 hour, 2 mile long trip. Meet at the Burleigh H. Murray Ranch parking lot, which is located on Higgins Purissima Road off of Highway 1 in Half Moon Bay. For more information, please call (650) 726-8819.

Events made possible by Coastside State Parks Association, California State Parks Docents, and California State Parks.

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Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park

Day Use Area located off Hwy 9 in Felton (831) 335-7077

Fall Creek Unit located at 1400 Felton Empire Rd.

Campground entrance located at 2591 Graham Hill Rd.

Guided Redwood Grove Walks

For energy efficient recreation –
California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>



Every Saturday in December at 1 pm

How do redwoods grow to become the tallest organisms on earth? How important are banana slugs to the redwood ecosystems? Why are there so few old growth trees left? Answer these questions and more every Saturday on our Redwood Grove Walks. One of our knowledgeable docents will lead you through our magnificent old growth forest and answer any questions you may have. Meet at the Visitors Center in the Day Use area of Henry Cowell located off of Hwy 9 in Felton. The program is free, parking is \$10.

Basket Making Workshop

Saturday, December 5 from 10 am to Noon

Saturday, December 12 from 10 am to Noon

Join Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park Docent Cheryle VanDeVeer or a fun, free, family workshop learning how to make a basket from local pine needles. Meet at the Park Visitor Center in the Day Use area of Henry Cowell Redwoods, located off of Hwy 9 in Felton. No experience necessary. All materials supplied. Children should be accompanied by an adult. The program is free, parking is \$10.

Bird Walk

Sunday, December 20 from 8 am to 10 am

Henry Cowell is home to many beautiful and fascinating birds. Join docent Jim Williams for a leisurely bird walk. Please bring your own binoculars and dress in layers. We will meet in front of the Mountain Parks Nature Store Center in the Day Use area of Henry Cowell located off of Hwy 9 in Felton. The program is free, parking is \$10.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Mountain Parks Foundation. Visit us on the web at www.mountainparks.org or www.parks.ca.gov

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Butano State Park

1500 Cloverdale Road, Pescadero (650) 879-2040

Wildflower Walk

Sunday, December 6 at 11 am

Walk along the trails of Butano State Park with Volunteer Naturalist Scott Peden. This is a slow paced, 3 hour stroll with time to discover and identify plants, flowers and animals in the park, and allow for photography if you choose. Bring water, lunch or snacks, and plenty of questions. Meet at the parks Visitor Center near the entrance station.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Coastside State Parks Foundation. Visit us on the web at www.CoastsideStateParks.org and [Facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks](https://www.facebook.com/CoastsideStateParks) or www.parks.ca.gov

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Big Basin Redwoods State Park

Located 9 miles outside of Boulder Creek on Hwy 236 at 21600 Big Basin Way.

For energy efficient recreation –
California State Parks on the Internet: <<http://www.parks.ca.gov>>



Redwood Grove Loop Walk

Every Saturday and Sunday at 1 pm (except at 11 am on Sunday, December 13)

Friday, December 25 at 11 am

How do these grand redwoods grow to be so old? So tall? How are they important to humans? Join us for this fun and informative guided 0.5 mile stroll through a magnificent old growth redwood forest. Meet the famous Mother Tree, the Father of the Forest and the incredible Chimney Tree on this 90 minute walk. Stroller and wheelchair accessible. Meet at Park Headquarters. Heavy rain cancels.

Coffee Talk and Crafts

Sunday, December 6 from 9 to Noon

Saturday, December 19 from 9 to Noon

Come to the Sempervirens Room next to Park Headquarters for free coffee or hot chocolate! This is a great way to start your day in Big Basin. Docent Kathy Willott will be happy to answer your questions about the park and help get you going on the right trail. And bring the kids for a fun craft activity!

Berry Creek Falls Hike

Sunday, December 13 at 9:30 am

Travel deep into the heart of Big Basin as you experience a wide range of habitats on this moderate to strenuous 11 mile loop hike. Wind through shady redwood canyons and climb dry ridges as you hike to the jewel of Big Basin, 65 foot Berry Creek Falls. Bring lots of water, lunch and wear layers. Docent Bill Rhoades will guide you on this seven-hour hike. Meet at Park Headquarters.

Discover Big Basin Redwoods Hike!

Sunday, December 13 at Noon

Explore some of the park's less travelled backcountry with Docent Barry Grimm. This hike will be individually tailored to your group, so distance can vary from 2 to 8 miles, depending on your needs. The pace is always moderate, with occasional short stops to discover the park's unique animals, plants and other natural features. Based on group size, experience level and weather conditions, we will choose from the many trails that explore the park's most scenic areas. Dress in layers for changeable weather and temperatures. Bring sturdy walking shoes, water and trail snacks. Meet at Park Headquarters.

Wildflower Walk!

Saturday, December 19 at 10 am

Sunday, December 20 at 10 am

Join Docent Scott Peden on this slow paced walk with lots of stops to identify flowering plants and take photos. You will also visit several historical spots within the park. Saturdays walk is a leisurely 4 mile, 4 hour amble that includes two chimney trees and a waterfall. Sundays walk is a relaxed 5 mile, 5 hour amble that includes a chimney tree. Bring water and lunch. Meet at Park Headquarters.

Hike to Buzzard's Roost

Sunday, December 20 from 10 am to 2 pm

Develop your hiking muscles with this challenging 5 mile round trip to Buzzard's Roost. Join Docent Steve Stolper for a hike to a dramatic rock formation with a commanding view of the park. We gain 1,200 feet in elevation on the way up. After a relaxed lunch on the rocks, we return to headquarters. Bring at least one liter of water, lunch, snacks, and appropriate clothing. Rain cancels. Meet at Park Headquarters.

Art, Books and Coffee

Saturday, December 26 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Come sit in our beautiful redwood Sempervirens Room (next to Park Headquarters), and choose a book or two to read with your family, while sipping coffee, tea or hot chocolate next to a roaring fire. Drop by and Docent Norm Beeson will help you find the perfect book for your family to enjoy, answer your questions about the park and provide an artful craft for your children.

Events made possible by California State Park Docents, California State Parks and Mountain Parks Foundation

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Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

144 School Street in Santa Cruz. Hours: Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, from 10 am to 4 pm. and Sundays from Noon to 4pm. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

Archeology Demonstration

Saturday, December 5 at 1 pm

How do artifacts give us clues to the past? Follow the archeological process from the dig to the display, and participate in hands-on activities to discover the stories told by the artifacts. Presented in collaboration with the Santa Cruz Archeological Society. This event is free. Rain Cancels. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet St. in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

Mission Building Game

Monday, December 21 from 11 am to 12:30 pm

Gather round the table and play a board game set in the 18th century. Spend Spanish real coins and roll the sheep's knucklebone to determine the fate of your mission. Geared for ages 8 and older. The event is free. Rain or shine. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

Guided Adobe Tour

Thursday, December 24 at 11 am

Saturday, December 26 at 1 pm

Join us at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park for a guided tour of the oldest building in Santa Cruz. Come learn about the many families who have called this 180 year old mission adobe their home. This event is free. Tours are conducted rain or shine. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission

Drop in Family Crafts

Saturday, December 5 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Ramillettas”

Saturday, December 12 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Paper Roses”

Friday, December 18 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Ramillettas”

Saturday, December 19 from 1pm 3:30 pm “Luminaria”

Monday, December 21 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Candle Dipping”

Thursday, December 24 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Ramillettas”

Monday, December 28 from 1 pm to 3:30 pm “Luminaria”

Saturday, December 31 from 1 pm to 3:30 “Candle Dipping”

Enjoy an informal afternoon at this hidden jewel near downtown Santa Cruz. Create Ramillettas (colorful layered paper decorations), a bouquet of Tepeyac Hill roses in the tradition of the Lady of Guadalupe, fashion a Luminaria (tin lantern) in our garden courtyard, or hand dip a wax candle. Rain or Shine. This event is free. The Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park is located on School St. off of Mission and Emmet Street in Santa Cruz. Please call (831) 425-5849 for more information.

Events made possible by Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks and California State Parks

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